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of Engineers®**
Memphis District

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Dredge keeps New Madrid Harbor open as vital link to world markets

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Oct. 4, 2007 – The river dredge Venture, contracted by the Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, completed work Oct. 3 at the New Madrid Harbor in the Missouri Bootheel, ensuring the facility will remain open for regional agribusiness to ship commodities to world markets via the Mississippi River. The dredge began work in the harbor Sept. 30.

“The water level of the Mississippi River has been a great challenge this summer with specific impact on our inland harbors,” said Col. Thomas. P. Smith, Commander of the Corps’ Memphis District. “Fortunately, the teamwork of the local community, our Congressional representatives, the contractor and the Corps of Engineers has enabled us to mitigate some of the impact. We know we’re not done yet but will continue to aggressively execute until complete.”

Col. Smith cited the combined efforts of U.S. Sen. Kit Bond, Sen. Claire McCaskill and U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson in making the emergency dredging effort possible. Dredging for New Madrid Harbor was not included in the Corps’ original budget for the year.

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Dredge-2/2/2/2

The dredge Venture, owned by Weeks Marine of Homma, La., can cut a 500-foot-long channel, 250 feet wide each day, according to Richard Sullivan, chief of the Memphis District's Navigation Branch.

Shoaling and sedimentation related to low river stages have plagued New Madrid Harbor officials this summer. Corps officials in Memphis said they will continue to monitor the situation and do all they can to ensure the harbor stays open for use.

Next stop for the dredge Venture will be Pemiscot County Harbor at Caruthersville, Mo.

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The contract river dredge Venture working to keep New Madrid Harbor open for regional commerce.